

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

DON'T BE DECEIVED

**Ethicist Supports the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act,
Clarifies Misleading Use of His Quote**

Dear Colleague:

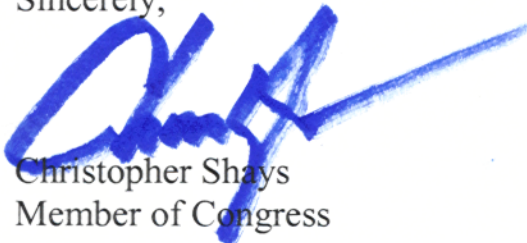
We want to call your attention to the attached letter from Dr. Glenn McGee, an ethicist whose quote was recently circulated on a flyer by a group calling itself, "Do No Harm: The Coalition of Americans for Research Ethics," apparently in opposition to expanding embryonic stem cell research.

In the attached letter, Dr. McGee states about the quote the group used, "This quote is grossly out of context."

In fact, Dr. McGee shares his support for passage of H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. In his letter, Dr. McGee states, "In fact, H.R. 810...is the only certain way to ensure that this research proceeds in the United States with rigorous and public ethical and scientific review."

Please join us in supporting H.R. 810, which expands the President's stem cell research policy while maintaining the ethical guidelines the President set down in August 2001. Please don't hesitate to contact Matt Meyer with Rep. Shays (5-5541) or Nick Shipley with Rep. Inslee (5-6311) if you have any questions or need additional information on this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Christopher Shays
Member of Congress



Jay Inslee
Member of Congress

Dear Representatives Shays and Inslee:

I wish to take exception to a flyer that was circulated to your colleagues by an organization calling itself "Do No Harm." This flyer (The "Political Science" of Stem Cells Lesson 1: The Fountain of Youth) quotes me as saying in 2001 that stem cells are difficult to control and there is a potential that they could "explode into a cancerous mass" after transplantation.

This quote is grossly out of context.

I made this statement in response to a question about whether embryonic stem cell research (at the time of the interview) could be applied as a therapy via direct injection into the brain for degenerative brain disorders in clinical trials. In essence I was asked what could happen (as of 2001) to someone who might theoretically receive a direct infusion of pluripotent embryonic stem cells for Parkinsons' Disease.

My answer was correct regarding the theoretical injection of stem cells as a Parkinsons' therapy. Such an injection—especially four years ago—would have been medically irresponsible and morally unacceptable given our scientific knowledge at the time. I was speaking as an ethicist and about a specific issue: how can we accurately assess potential harm in seeking informed consent from a prospective patient?

I am an ardent supporter of human embryonic stem cell research and of the development of new lines of such stem cells for research. I have repeatedly written in the peer-reviewed literature that I am convinced we should move forward with stem cell research. And I have worked for years to ensure that stem cell research is subjected to rigorous ethical review, which it is now and will be in the future. In fact, passage of H.R. 810, your legislation to broaden the President's stem cell research policy, is the only certain way to ensure that this research proceeds in the United States with rigorous and public ethical and scientific review.

I am deeply offended that my words have been used out of context to push a narrow political agenda. Do No Harm's flyer is disingenuous and dishonest and quotes me out of context. The distinguished individuals listed on the flyer should first do no harm to their personal integrity.

Sincerely,

Glenn McGee PhD
The John A. Balint Endowed Chair of Medical Ethics
Editor, *The American Journal of Bioethics*, and
Director, the Center for Medical Ethics Research
Albany Medical Center/College
47 New Scotland Avenue MC153
Albany NY 12208